DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 446 UD 033 232

TITLE	The Stories of Thirty-Two Young People Who Achieved Success and the Programs That Helped Them.
INSTITUTION	National Youth Employment Coalition, Washington, DC.; Employment and Training Administration (DOL), Washington, DC. Office of Policy and Research.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, MI.
PUB DATE	1998-09-00
NOTE	41p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Youth Employment Coalition, 1836 Jefferson Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Tel: 202-659-1064; Fax: 202-659-0399; Web site: <http://www.nyec.org>.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Achievement; Adolescents; Community Programs; Disadvantaged Youth; Minority Groups; Success; Young Adults; Youth Opportunities; *Youth Programs

ABSTRACT

This publication presents the real-life experiences of 32 young people who participated in youth programs that helped guide them to success. The featured young people got themselves organized, developed skills, and took charge of their lives, many of them overcoming major barriers to do so. They were able to get on track because of effective youth programs which provided them with the support, skills, and experiences they needed to succeed. In 1998, the 32 young people from 14 PEPNet (Promising and Effective Practices Network) programs came to Washington, DC, to speak with their Senators and Congressional representatives and to meet with the Deputy Secretary of Labor. Each of their programs had demonstrated effectiveness in four areas: strong, stable, and effective management; well-conceived and implemented approach to youth development; clear emphasis on developing skills, knowledge, and competencies that lead to jobs and careers; and evidence of success, using credible data or other measures. (SM)

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ED 437 446

The stories of thirty-two young people who achieved success and the programs that helped them.

billy, keri
andrea, vicky
hector, dion
anthony, eric
drayvon,
basillio, james
jason, reanna
juan, terrell
tacara, vanessa
melisa, glenda
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About NYEC

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is a network of over 100 youth employment/ development organizations dedicated to promoting policies and programs which help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers, and self-sufficient citizens.

NYEC prepared this report in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Research of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

About PEPNet

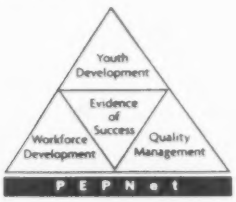
Effective youth programs come in many forms and formats. These are programs doing the right things and doing them well.

PEPNet, the Promising and Effective Practices Network, is an NYEC initiative that determined what those "right things" are and created a stringent application and peer review process for recognizing youth initiatives that meet those standards. Any organization serving young people, ages fourteen to twenty-five, may apply to be recognized.

The stories in this booklet represent the thirty-two PEPNet awardees recognized in 1996 and 1997. Each program demonstrated effectiveness in the following four areas:

- Strong, stable, and effective management;
- Well conceived and implemented approach to youth development;
- Clear emphasis on developing skills, knowledge, and competencies that lead to jobs and careers; and
- Evidence of success, using credible data or other measures.

PEPNet also helps youth programs identify their strengths and weaknesses, using a self-assessment based on the PEPNet criteria, and provides information about effective practice to the public and policy makers.



PEPNet Funders

The following organizations have provided the funds to make PEPNet possible:

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration

The Ford Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Acknowledgements

NYEC would like to pay special thanks to Deputy Secretary of Labor Kitty Higgins for taking an interest in the lives of these young people; to Deputy Assistant Secretary Ray Uhalde for his support and guidance throughout the creation of PEPNet; to Stephanie Powers for her help in organizing the Award and Recognition ceremony; and to our grant project officer, Nancy Rose, for her guidance and support of youth employment programs and the young people they serve.

NYEC especially thanks the PEPNet sites and their young people for their efforts in providing the stories and photographs for this report.

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"You are about to meet some young people who are excited about the future."

There's Keri, who grew up in a New York City public housing project and will be attending John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York this fall. There's Vicky, who moved from the streets of Los Angeles towards a career in horticulture; James, an electrician apprentice who plans to become an electrical engineer; and twenty-nine more young adults in cities across the United States, going to school, working, raising families.

These are young people who got themselves organized, developed skills, and are taking charge of their lives, many of them overcoming major barriers to do so. But they did not do it on their own. They were able to get on track because effective youth programs exist, providing the support, skills, and experiences these young people and thousands more need to succeed.

In the Spring of 1998, young people from fourteen PEPNet award winners came to Washington, DC. They spoke with their Senators and Congressional representatives and then met as a group with Deputy Secretary of Labor Kitty Higgins. She was so impressed with them, she wanted others to hear what they had to say.

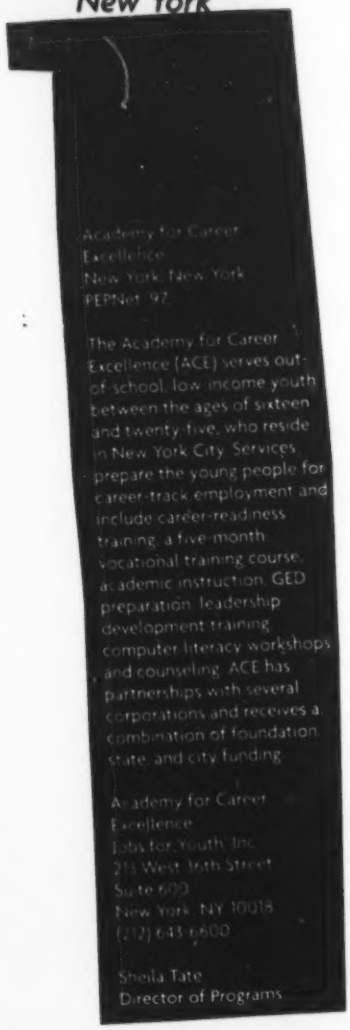
Take a few minutes to read their stories. You will discover how investing in young people pays off — for everyone.

Alan Zuckerman
Executive Director
National Youth Employment Coalition

Basillio Muniz III
Age 23
Academy for Career Excellence

basillio:

New York


Academy for Career Excellence
New York, New York
FEPNet '97
The Academy for Career Excellence (ACE) serves out-of-school, low-income youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, who reside in New York City. Services prepare the young people for career-track employment and include career-readiness training, a five-month vocational training course, academic instruction, GED preparation, leadership development training, computer literacy workshops and counseling. ACE has partnerships with several corporations and receives a combination of foundation, state, and city funding.
Academy for Career Excellence
Jobs for Youth, Inc.
215 West 10th Street
Suite 600
New York, NY 10018
(212) 643-6600
Sheila Tate
Director of Programs

I live in the Bronx, come from a minority family, and am striving to make a future for my family as well as myself.

I am a young adult who has no children and does not believe in the public assistance; it keeps minorities under control.

Before I came to Jobs for Youth, Inc. to work on my GED, I was just biding my time. After going through my GED class, this past March I was asked to join a start-up business with Jobs for Youth called "7 Star Virtual Concepts." The new venture was to teach a small group of chosen participants to do computer coding. This would be a new experience for me. My knowledge of computers would expand tremendously. I had no experience with computer coding, but I did like to explore through them.

The first two weeks were very tough and there were many days when I felt that it was just too much and I considered quitting. But for some reason I did not. About three weeks into the program we were given our own laptop computers to work on and take home. That first weekend I took my laptop home I spent a lot of time on it (my new toy), creating new designs and graphics, even spectacular effects that amazed me at the time.

As for Jobs for Youth, they were the ones who helped me get my life on track with the excellent staff and thoughtful efforts. They also reach out to the youths that come to their doors. I found this agency when I applied for my GED at Bronx Community College. One of the staff members recommended me to Jobs for Youth and its excellent GED program.

In regards to my future goals, I will be a Web page designer and fulfill my life-long dream to become a video game programmer. I am able to learn at a much faster rate, thanks to the opportunities that were offered to me while at Jobs for Youth. With all this programming, I will have no problem entering the new millennium with the skills I am learning at Jobs for Youth. If you want to take a look at some of our work, look on the Web for http://www.JobsforYouth.org/jfyyouth. I would like to say thank you to all the staff members of Jobs for Youth for helping me through my difficult times.

> "They were the ones who helped me get my life on track."

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Carri Thin-Elk
Age 18
Arizona CALL-A-TEEN

I am a Native American. Three years ago I was unemployed and a dropout with no future. I frequently ran away from home and was involved in the drug scene. Since I dropped out of school, I had no education or vocational training to obtain employment. This made me feel as if I were useless and had no way out of my situation.

> "I now know what I must do to be successful and that the decisions are mine. It is very exciting."

A counselor at my old school referred my family and me to Arizona CALL-A-TEEN. I was bored doing nothing and finally agreed to take charge of my life and make a change. Arizona CALL-A-TEEN has a Charter High School (The Center of Excellence), and a JTPA job training program, so I followed the counselor's advice and visited the school. My involvement with Arizona CALL-A-TEEN has lasted three years. I look forward to coming to school and will graduate in 1999.

Besides making sure that I returned to and remained in school, Arizona CALL-A-TEEN provided me with avenues to make decisions about my future. By living up to my obligations as a student in the school, I was also given the opportunity to enroll in their JTPA program where I took part in a classroom-based project during the summer. A group of six participants planned, organized, priced, completed a health fair, and collected and distributed food for the needy. The project helped me to become aware of the needs of my community and to work as a member of a team. I was proud of my accomplishments.

This year, through the JTPA program, I actually worked at the CALL-A-TEEN main facility. They must have been very pleased with my work, because when a part-time job opened up, I was hired. What I like about the job is that it has high standards and I am expected to succeed. I am treated as a regular member of the staff and not just a kid they are helping.

The contrast of where I was when I came to Arizona CALL-A-TEEN and where I am now is like night and day. I believe in myself, my talent, and that I can make a difference in this world. My future? I am looking forward to a career as a pharmacist. I now know what I must do to be successful and that the decisions are mine. It is very exciting.

:arri:
Phoenix
Arizona

Arizona CALL-A-TEEN
Phoenix, Arizona
PEPNet '96

Arizona CALL-A-TEEN offers two separate programs for young people from the greater metropolitan Phoenix area. The charter public high school integrates work and learning, providing a full range of academic instruction, workplace preparation, community service, and volunteer and work experience. The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) component focuses on pre-employment and work maturity skills, basic education, and job specific skills. The programs, which serve youth sixteen to twenty-one who are not in school, receive funding from the city and state, the school district, and JTPA.

Arizona CALL-A-TEEN
649 North 6th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85003
(602) 252-6721

Bernice Lever
Chief Executive Officer

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Terrell Taylor
Age 20
Baltimore City
Fire Cadet Program

terrell:

Baltimore
Maryland

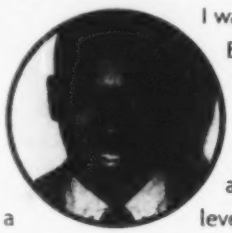
Baltimore City Fire Cadet Program
Baltimore, Maryland
PEPNet '97

This one-year program prepares city high school juniors and seniors for careers in fire fighting and medical services. The students receive actual fire fighter and emergency medical technician training, take part in community service projects and field trips, and are assigned to a division of the Fire Department. During the school year, participants attend their home school in the morning and fire cadet classes in the afternoon. The initiative is funded by the school district, Baltimore City Office of Economic Development, and the Baltimore County Fire Department.

Baltimore City Fire
Cadet Program
Baltimore City Office of
Employment Development
101 W. 24th Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 396-6722

Alice Cole
Management Specialist

I am an only child, raised by my mother who works as a para-professional for the local school system. I began doing odd jobs at the age of eleven to help support myself, and at the age of fourteen, I obtained a part-time position at a retirement home.



I was enrolled in a Technology Education Center majoring in electronics with an emphasis on computer repair. I did not consider college as an option because I was tired of going to school and lacked the motivation to do anything except get my high school diploma and continue working.

All of this changed when I received a letter in the mail informing me about the Fire Cadet program. Even though my teacher and current employer discouraged me from trying to gain admission into the program, I made a decision to do something positive to turn my life around. I needed more than a part-time job to survive on my own, and I was not interested in pursuing a career in the computer field.

I was selected for the Fire Cadet program during the summer between my junior and senior years of high school. I successfully completed the program the summer after my high school graduation.

I was then hired by the Baltimore City Fire Department. I worked in administration for two years and am currently assigned to Truck 21 as a level 2 apprentice.

Being a part of the program increased my self confidence, enhanced my communication skills, and helped me to earn respect from my peers and community. It also provided a level of discipline that has enabled me to work a full-time job, go to school, and continue with the part-time job I have held since I was fourteen.

The instructors have taught me the importance of giving back to the community and being a role model for other youth. Now I am more willing to organize and participate in activities for the senior citizens at the retirement home and I have volunteered to coach basketball at the recreation center in my neighborhood. My short range goal is to complete my fire and medical service training and eventually become an instructor for the Cadet Program.

"The instructors have taught me the importance of giving back to the community and being a role model for other youth."

Michelle Lewis
Age 18
Bucks County Office of Employment and Training Summer Youth Program

I am a senior at Central Bucks West High School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania

Upon graduation, I will be attending Temple University. At age fourteen I entered a group home for girls. I have lived here for five years.

Before I entered BCOET Summer Youth Program, I did not have any work experience. The major barrier I faced was learning to cope with my abusive past. I was made aware of the program through my group home parents. I considered this program for several reasons. First of all, I needed to work in a team. Secondly, I wanted to learn job skills. Finally, I felt it was a big step in helping me gain independence.

I started the program in the summer of 1995. I continued through the summer of 1997. I had many experiences while working for BCOET. One incident that stands out in my mind happened in the second year I worked there. Our group was not able to work as a team. Our group leader sat us down and explained the importance of working together. We learned to put our differences aside and accomplish our goals as a team.

Currently I am working for an insurance company a few hours after school. I am also getting ready to enter my freshman year of college. In five years I plan to be working as a child psychologist in Bucks County. The skills I learned through BCOET will follow me and my career in the working world.

michelle:

Chalfont

Bucks County Office of Employment and Training
Doylestown, Pennsylvania
PEPNet '96

This summer youth program combines work experience and unique academic enrichment activities encompassing a theme. In 1995, the theme was "Treasures and the Law." Three and one-half days a week the young people, ages sixteen to twenty-one, worked on community service projects. The rest of the week they examined archeological, historical, technical, and cultural factors regarding the quest for, finding, and legalities of sunken treasures. The program ended with a mock trial. The initiative receives funding from JTPA, the county, the school district, and the National Association of Counties.

Bucks County Office of Employment and Training
4259 Swamp Road
Suite 303
Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 340-2020

Cindi Hopkins
Special Projects Coordinator

"We learned to put our differences aside and accomplish our goals as a team."

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Andrea Hubbard
Age 19
Career Link Academy

andrea:
Seattle

I came to Career Link Academy in August 1997, at the beginning of my junior year of high school.

I was born in Seattle and had so many behavior problems in elementary school that I was sent to several alternative programs in the county. When my mother remarried, we moved to Dallas, Texas. I still had behavior problems and was referred to the alternative high school. But I was insubordinate and my behavior got worse.

At the beginning of my sophomore year my family returned to Seattle. I attended one school for two months and then had to transfer to another. I spent all summer trying to make another attempt at the public schools. Then a friend told me about a program for troubled youth. I called Career Link Academy for an appointment and my life has never been the same.

I had a reputation with the other students when I arrived. They knew that even though I weighed only about ninety pounds and looked timid and calm, I would "scrap" (fight violently) with even the best known fighters. But I had decided that Career Link Academy was the only choice I had, and I knew I had to abide by their rules and regulations.

"I wanted more than a job. I wanted a career."

I had near perfect attendance in all my classes during the first quarter. When I told the staff I was interested in working during the school year, the job advisor helped me find a job as a desk clerk with a local youth outreach program. I learned all about working in an office and how to behave as a professional. I worked through the holiday break, and my employer was very pleased with me. But I wanted more than a job, I wanted a career.

In January, I began working to complete my GED and passed all the tests except math. I need just three more points. I want to take business technology courses, learn several types of software programs, and eventually to work in an office. I have a job for the summer and the staff at Career Link Academy tell me I am on my way to becoming a model student.

Career Link Academy
Seattle, Washington
PEPNet '98

Students at Career Link Academy come primarily from West Seattle and the Seattle Rainier Valley and range in age from sixteen to nineteen. Community agencies refer participants to the Academy where they can earn a GED while receiving job training and job readiness skills. Areas of vocational training include computer technology and business, culinary arts, automotive technology, cosmetology, and welding fabrication. The academy tracks the progress of graduates for eighteen months. Career Link Academy receives State Department of Education and JTPA funds.

Career Link Academy
South Seattle Community College, Building 146A
6000 16th Avenue, S.W.
Seattle, WA 98106
(206) 764-7946

Joseph S. Bowman III
Instructor/Job Advisor

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Carmen Cardenas
Age 18
Casa Verde Builders
AmeriCorps
YouthBuild Program

:armen:

Austin
Texas

Casa Verde Builders
AmeriCorps YouthBuild Program
Austin, Texas
PEPNet '96

Members of the Casa Verde Builders are seventeen to twenty-five years old and come from the East Austin neighborhood. Most are not in school. They must commit at least six months to the program and spend 50 percent of their time in the classroom, working on academic foundation skills, career preparation, and project-based community service learning. The other half of their time they spend learning entry-level construction skills and building energy-efficient, low-income housing. Casa Verde Builders receives funding from HUD, AmeriCorps, and Home Depot.

Casa Verde Builders
AmeriCorps YouthBuild Program
American Institute for Learning
204 E. 4th Street
Austin, TX 78702
(512) 472-3395

Richard Halpin
Executive Director

The American Institute for Learning (AIL) and Casa Verde were my salvation and last opportunity. AIL, which collaborates with Casa Verde, is a school, the likes of which I've never seen, and believe me, I've seen a few, as I've attended seventeen different schools in my thirteen years of education. The small student-to-teacher ratio makes it easier for students to learn and to receive more one-on-one attention. AIL also provides child care, career, and health care centers to meet participants' needs.

I attend AIL from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. My time from 8:00 to 12:00 belongs to Casa Verde. Casa Verde is an AmeriCorps program building highly energy-efficient homes for low-income families. I've built cabinets, used a chopsaw, mowed a lawn, and gone canoeing. I have never done any of these activities and never thought I would. I was skeptical as to whether I could make it; but much to my glee, I've found that I am capable of making a good cabinet, and that I'm actually more capable than some of my male colleagues. I have plenty of support services and many individuals always willing to listen. I finally feel that I'm making progress and that I'm on the road to college. Casa Verde will also give me a scholarship of $4,750 for 1,700 hours of service. The scholarship will allow me to get my start in college.

Before I came to Casa Verde, I was at a dead end as far as my education went. I tried many ways of combining school and work, but they refused to bond. Unfortunately, the circumstances at home forced me to choose work and forego school. Despite working my way up to $7.00 per hour at a fast food store, I couldn't imagine much of a future there. So I went to AIL to see about earning a diploma. It was there that I heard of Casa Verde.

Where do I see myself in five years? I will have received my degree in journalism. I will have worked a year already for the Austin American Statesman, and I will be making myself known in the journalism community. My husband and I will be planning and saving for our first-born child. All of this, I believe, will be possible because I was finally able to complete my education.

"Much to my glee, I've found I'm capable of making a good cabinet."

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reanna:

San Jose California

Reanna Burch
Age 18
CCOC Effective Educational Methodologies for Youth Employment

When it was time to choose my classes for my junior year in high school, I received a flyer about Central County Occupational Center. CCOC was presented as a vocational school where I could learn specialized skills targeted to one field. They have classes that range from nursing to auto body. I chose Computer Assisted Accounting and Finance.

Before my classes at CCOC, I had no idea of what it takes to enter the workforce. I didn't know that "soft" skills-communication, diligence, and attitude-were so important. I had no work experience, no training. I chose CCOC because they offered all this. CCOC promised to give me the training I needed to get a job.

I started in the fall of 1996 and I received my certificate of completion in June 1997. During that time I learned not only accounting, but also how to run computer software, how to dress for the office, the correct way to interact with workmates, and how to write my own resume. What helped me the most was the accounting internships my teacher, Mrs. Melrose, arranged for me. One internship was with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors for Santa Clara County. I prepared charts and graphs used by the Board in budget forecasting for all of Santa Clara County. At the other internship, I was the accounting clerk for a small business. I loaded their accounting software on their computer and entered all historical transactions. I valued these opportunities the most because of the work experience I received from them.

> "I prepared charts and graphs used by the Board in budget forecasting for all of Santa Clara County."

Because of the training CCOC gave me I now hold a part-time position as an accounting clerk. After I graduate from high school this June, I plan to further my education in accounting, possibly becoming a CPA. I know that throughout my career nothing will be more beneficial towards getting and keeping a job than the practical skills I learned at CCOC.

CCOC Effective Educational Methodologies for Youth Employment
San Jose, California
PEPNet '97

Central County Occupational Center/Program provides vocational education and workforce preparation for six school districts in central Santa Clara County, serving thirty-nine public and private high schools. Selected juniors and seniors attend the center three hours each day, receiving training in more than fifty specialty areas from twelve major occupations. The rest of the day they attend their home school. Local businesses provide sites for cooperative vocational education and internships. The Center receives funding from state and federal sources.

Central County Occupational Center/Program
Effective Educational Methodologies for Youth Employment
760 Hillsdale Avenue
San Jose, CA 95136
(408) 723-6400

Orville Buesing
Director

Joseph T. Ferraro
Age 18
CITE of Rochester/
Monroe County

joseph:

Rochester

CITE of Rochester/Monroe County, New York
Rochester, New York
PEPNet '97

CITE (Center for Innovation, Training, and Education) targets out-of-school youth most of whom come from local homeless shelters or foster care residences. The year-round program helps those sixteen to twenty-one earn their GED, prepare for SAT exams, and learn about various occupations leading to further education or a job. Counseling and mentoring continues after participants are in college or technical school. The summer program provides academic remediation, career exploration, and work experience. Funding comes from local Private Industry Councils, with support from the city school district.

CITE of Rochester/Monroe County, New York
ARBOR, Inc.
One West Third Street
Media, PA 19063
(610) 566-8700

Gabriel Ross, PhD
President: Education & Training Division

Getting high could sum up my freshman and sophomore years of high school.

I dropped out of school at sixteen. It took me four hard months to realize that life had to change, for the better. The only way to do that was to go back to school. I was an outcast at my old school because of my horrendous background as a troublemaker, so I enrolled in an alternative program I heard about from a friend.

"CITE gave me the opportunity to make up for my mistakes."

The Center for Innovation, Training, and Education (CITE) gave me the opportunity to make up for my mistakes with a caring staff who were dedicated to my success. They believed in me. I now enjoy learning, where before I would skip classes because of disinterest and not enough attention from the teachers. I am no longer frustrated! I scored well above the national average for a high school senior on the SATs. That is an accomplishment considering I never finished tenth grade. Then I took the GED and easily passed. I started to receive acceptance letters from colleges in New York State.

I blame myself for my drug and alcohol use. I was curious and immature. Not any more. I have faced many hardships in my life, most recently the death of my grandmother whom I loved dearly. I use her memory as motivation to carry on, one day at a time. CITE helped me to grow as a person and student. I had more attention and motivation in the program learning that life can be so much better with an education. The director of CITE took a lot of time to talk with me about my personal issues. He even spoke to college admissions offices as to why they should accept a high school dropout. It took me seven long months to graduate from the program. But I did, with perfect attendance.

I was named the 1997 class valedictorian at CITE and The Private Industry Council named me the 1997 Monroe County Youth Graduate of the Year. I am now finishing my freshman year at the Rochester Institute of Technology where I am in the High Educational Opportunity Program studying criminal justice. In five or ten years, I hope I will be working with people, giving back to those that have helped me.

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Tacara Soones
Age 17
Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS²)

Growing up in Brockton Massachusetts, I have had many experiences and opportunities that have helped me to achieve.

At the time when I began the Summer of Work and Learning in July 1997, I was first in my class, first oboe in our concert band, and a participant in various other clubs. However, they were not giving me the exposure to the field that I was interested in. I have always wanted to be a doctor and was searching for a medical opportunity. Needless to say, hospitals are very reluctant to hire sixteen-year-olds with two years left of high school and no medical background. My guidance counselor found the Summer of Work and Learning program run by Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS²).

CS² helped me to face my greatest fear, that I would go through college only to find that medicine was not for me. The two months I spent in the West Roxbury VA Hospital operating room were priceless. After the first surgery I knew I belonged there. A carotid endartorectomy (the removing of build-up from the carotid artery in the neck) enhanced my eternal awe of the human body. As I watched the carotid pulse with blood, I placed my fingers on my neck, amazed at the complexity of our physical selves. The surgeries made possible by CS² significantly changed my life. There are no longer doubts or worries that I am going in the wrong direction.

The Summer of Work and Learning is a tremendous experience for all of the students involved. Not only does it either renew or create direction, but it also teaches work ethics. By working four days a week at a hospital and the fifth on a group research project, we also learned useful research skills.

This valuable work experience, and the skills learned therein, has inspired me to apply to many prestigious colleges such as Harvard and Johns Hopkins University. Five years from now I hope to be in medical school actualizing my dream reinforced by the Summer of Work and Learning.

"Hospitals are very reluctant to hire sixteen-year-olds with two years left of high school and no medical background."

Brockton

tacara:

Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS²)
Boston, Massachusetts
PEPNet '97

CS² works to connect student learning and experience more directly with the world of work and the broader community, and operates in middle and high schools in six communities. In the middle schools, locally designed approaches include active learning, project-based activities, and community service learning. High schools offer job shadowing opportunities, internships, and integrated work and learning summer programs. Support comes from private foundations, businesses, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the communities themselves.

Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS²)
Corporation for Business Work and Learning
The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street
Boston, MA 02129
(617) 727-8158

Ephriam Weisstein
Director, Center for Youth Development and Education

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ıector:

Norwalk
California

Hector Hernandez
Age 22
Community Youth Corps

I come from a family of four. My mother, my sister, my brother, and I. I never had an adult male role model. I was involved in drugs and gang violence. My brother disappeared when I was six years old, so I become the man of the house.

> "I had a tattoo on my left eyebrow; I had another tattoo on my neck, three large letters; and I was on parole."

I ended up in the California Youth Authority incarcerated for three years for my gang activity. I was seventeen. When I got out I needed a job and a GED. I found the Community Youth Corps in the paper. When I went to the Youth Corps, I had three things in my way: I had a tattoo on my left eyebrow; I had another tattoo on my neck, three large letters; and I was on parole. When I went to the Youth Corps, I put a piece of tape over my left eyebrow and wore collared shirts to cover my tattoos. The thing that made a difference with this program was that there were people in the Youth Corps who accepted me for me. They did not turn me away, when in the past a lot of people did. They helped me when I needed help the most. The Youth Corps staff helped me get my tattoos removed through an agency they knew of. It took me two tries, but I passed by GED test and I was ready for work.

The Community Youth Corps hooked me up with United Parcel Service and I was hired on for Christmas help. UPS told me I was good help and kept me beyond the Christmas rush. Now I'm working for AT&T and I enjoy working there very much. I meet a lot of interesting people. In five years, I would like to see myself as a correctional officer for the California Youth Authority. Maybe more troubled youth could hear my story and they could see that anybody can succeed if they want to, gang members and all.

Community Youth Corps
Norwalk, California
PEPNet '97

Operated by the Southeast Los Angeles Private Industry Council, Community Youth Corps serves at-risk, out-of-school young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. The six-month program offers activities ranging from GED preparation and basic academic skills instruction to career exploration and counseling, job search skills, and work ethics to job placement and post-graduation support. JTPA provides 95 percent of the initiative's funding, with in-kind contributions covering the rest.

Community Youth Corps
Southeast Los Angeles County Private Industry Council, Inc.
12440 E. Firestone Boulevard, #101 West
Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 406-2477

Miguel Meza
Community Youth Corps Coordinator

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Juan Medina
Age 19
David L. Carrasco
Job Corps Center

juan:

El Paso
Texas

The only education I ever received was in elementary school. When I turned twelve, I started to study electronics, but I never completed it because my father became ill and did not have the money to pay for my school. Since I was the only boy in the family, I worked to get money for my family, and stopped pursuing my education.

When I turned eighteen, I began looking for a job at the employment office. There I saw a poster that said something about a place which would give the opportunity to study a vocation, learn English, and get a GED; a placed called the David L. Carasco Job Corps Center. I visited the Center and was very impressed. I came on board on Monday, October 14, 1996. I enrolled to learn English, obtain my GED, complete my vocation, and go to college. In the first three months, I completed math, basic reading, ESL, started graded reading, and began my vocation in auto mechanics. Three months after, I passed my GED in English.

I am currently enrolled at El Paso Community College. Job Corps has definitely changed my life, because if I had never come to Job Corps, I would have never learned English, completed my academic and vocational classes, and enrolled in college. I am studying computer systems in college because that is what I want to do in the future. I would like to apply my training at a bank or be a member of a law enforcement agency. Believe me, none of this would have become a reality if I had never enrolled in Job Corps.

> "If I had never come to Job Corps, I would have never learned English, completed my academic and vocational classes, and enrolled in college."

David L. Carrasco Job Corps Center
El Paso, Texas
PEPNet '97

The Carrasco Center operates a residential and non-residential co-educational program for U.S. citizens and legal residents between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four who have not completed high school. The program includes vocational training, work experience, a school-to-work initiative, academic instruction, preparation for the GED certificate or high school diploma, counseling, employability training, driver education, and job placement assistance. Ranked "number one" in the country by the Job Corps National Office, the Carrasco Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

David L. Carrasco Job Corps Center
Texas Educational Foundation, Inc.
1115 Gateway West
El Paso, TX 79935
(915) 594-0022

Mary Young
Center Director

Billy Soden
Age 24
Denison Job Corps Center

I'm from Omaha, Nebraska, and before I entered this program, I was working hard at dead-end jobs.

Having dropped out of high school, I didn't have any useful skills or real experience at anything. I found out about Job Corps through an employment agency. I was interested in the program because it offered a chance to complete high school and learn a trade. Living on-center provides a stable environment in which to learn.

I entered the Job Corps program in May 1997. Only eleven months later, I have attained a high school diploma and I've reached the Receptionist level of the Business/Clerical trade. Job Corps has also given me valuable social skills. I can use them to get and keep a job when I leave the program.

The students and staff at the Denison Job Corps have aided me in my success. They are always ready to lend a helping hand. Staff care about my success and help me face reality when I get off track. I receive one-on-one attention when I need it to help me with my education. Everyone at Job Corps wants you to succeed.

I plan to begin taking college courses soon. The college program through Job Corps is another advantage that is offered to me. I will have an edge over other applicants in the job market when I have a degree. A few years from now, I will be a college graduate and well on my way to a successful career!

"I receive one-on-one attention when I need it, to help me with my education. Everyone at Job Corps wants you to succeed."

billy: Denison

Denison Job Corps Center
Denison, Iowa
PEPNet '96

Denison Job Corps Center is a residential program that serves up to 450 young people a year. The program offers vocational training, academics, GED and high school diploma preparation, social skills training, medical/dental services, recreational activities, housing, and placement services. Most of the work based vocational training takes place in actual work settings or lab set-ups. This open entry/exit program has new students arriving and leaving every week. The Center is operated by Management & Training Corporation with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Denison Job Corps Center
10 Opportunity Drive
Denison, IA 51442
(712) 263-4192

Robin Adams
Counseling Manager

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Shaun Lee
Age 19
FEGS Education & Career Services

shaun: New York

My experiences at FEGS were sometimes good and some times very frustrating

I like some people in this place and there were some people that really were a bother to me but all that was worked out.

It was the first day of orientation and I walked into the classroom and the first thing I noticed was that I was the only male in the school. So me being the man that I am, I got kind of excited and I started feeling real good. This was the first program I heard about that actually pays you to come to school. When I found that out I had the biggest smile on my face.

The teachers in the school are some of the nicest people you could ever meet. They sat down and helped us out whenever we asked. Even the counselors were cool. Maybe sometimes I would go off the deep end but all that has changed; I have more control. The teachers were always open to help when I had a problem either with class work or personal problems. They were not like the teachers in high school.

This school taught me a lot, not only about computers or work maturity, but also about life. I haven't gotten into so much trouble like I did before. They helped me calm down and realize that life was too short and precious to let my life get taken away from me. The program helped me forget about the past and dwell on what is more important. Now what is more important is my future and learning to control my temper. Honestly, I cannot say that I know what my future holds, but I am going to try my best to make everyone happy. I don't want to let down a lot of people. I am the most important person, so this time I am going to do it for myself, but I want the folks at FEGS to be proud of me. Thanks a lot FEGS, I'll never forget everything you did for me.

> "The school taught me a lot, not only about computers or work maturity, but also about life."

FEGS Education & Career Services
Bronx, New York
PEPNet '97

The Education and Career Service division of FEGS, a large, voluntary, not-for-profit human service organization, offers a variety of programs to support students, school staff, and school systems. Its school-to-careers initiative offers career exploration, job shadowing, mentoring, and internships in schools throughout the Bronx and Rockaway communities of New York City. Its city-wide Youth Employment Unit serves 100 out-of-school youth in a year-long program. FEGS receives federal, state, and local grants to support its activities.

FEGS Education & Career Services
Federation Employment and Guidance Service
FEGS School-to-Careers
Alfred E. Smith High School
333 E. 151 Street, B-39A
Bronx, NY 10453
(718) 401-3430 or 3439

Cliff Forest
Director, Educational Services

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"This day was the start of my new life."

Tom Zipp
Age 17
Fresh Start

:om:

Baltimore
Maryland

In my opinion, the Fresh Start program has made the most positive impact in my life so far. Before I began to attend Fresh Start, I was a very irresponsible person. I had quit high school and did nothing with my time but sleep all day. I had a very negative attitude towards everyone, including the person I love the most in this world, my mother.

I did a lot of negative things that hurt and disrespected her. I also did negative things that resulted in me being arrested and physically harmed. At this point, I decided that my life was too short and precious to waste time and take risks. I decided to do things the right way.

I started the Fresh Start program on January 12, 1998. I think this day was the start of my new life. My first day at the program went very well. I met pretty much everyone there. They all seemed to be down to earth people. As I started to attend regularly, my mother noticed a drastic change in my attitude. I was starting to come in early, go to bed early, and basically become more responsible. We also started to spend more time together. This made me feel motivated to attend because I knew my mother was happy. I was also encouraged because I knew my mother strongly supported me and the program. Being at Fresh Start is helpful because it gives you a change to be around positive people doing positive things. When you are exposed to this, you become a more positive person.

I have made plans with a fellow student, Jack, to start a construction business. I hope to be running this business five years from now.

Fresh Start
Baltimore, Maryland
PEPNet '96

Fresh Start enrolls low-income young people ages sixteen to twenty, most of whom have not completed school. The initiative lasts nine months and uses maritime settings to teach academic and job skills, integrating these in hands-on work projects. Students build and repair boats and engines, work in a marina, and crew aboard Living Classrooms Foundation vessels. Their classroom is the city- and state-sponsored Living Classrooms Maritime Institute. The program receives funds from county, state, and federal agencies along with the J. M. Kaplan Fund and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Fresh Start
Living Classrooms Foundation
Lighthouse at Pier 5
717 Eastern Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 685-0295

James Piper Bond
President

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"I knew I had to make changes and get on with my life."

shermane:

New Waverly

Texas

Gulf Coast Trades Center
New Waverly, Texas
PEPNet '96

This residential program serves young people ages sixteen through eighteen from urban areas in Texas. Its services range from assessment to basic academic skills to occupational training to GED preparation to substance abuse and career counseling to job placement. The training approach is self-paced and includes community service activities and paid community-based work experience. The Center receives funding from JTPA, the Texas Youth Commission, Juvenile Justice, the school district, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foundations, and individual supporters.

Gulf Coast Trades Center
P.O. Box 515
New Waverly, TX 77358
(409) 344-6677

Thomas M. "Mike" Buzbee,
Executive Director

Shermane Butler
Age 17
Gulf Coast Trades Center

My life story is like other troubled teenagers: I quit attending school, started hanging around with the wrong crowd, and began smoking. I ignored all the values and morals that my mother had taught me, and she no longer wanted me in the house. Because of my constant disruptions and lack of authority, I was picked up by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and placed in an emergency shelter in the Houston area for three months. I was now part of "the system." The emergency shelter was only temporary, and my next placement was Gulf Coast Trades Center. I enrolled on October 30, 1997.

I was very leery of attending the Center, but I knew I had to make changes and get on with my life. The Center had three programs that interested me: GED classes, driver education, and a vocational trade. I attained my GED and my driver's license in February 1998, with a great deal of help and persistence by my case worker, Ms. Torrence, the Learning Resource Center staff, and the driver education instructor. Without their help and encouragement, I would not have been as successful. In addition, I earned a vocational trades certificate in mill and cabinet making in April 1998, and currently I am participating in the Work Experience/Independent Skills Living Environment component of the program. I will complete the program at the end of June 1998, and if everything works out as planned, I will return to my mother's home.

Once I return home, I plan on enrolling in community college and getting a part-time job to help out at home. In five years, I expect to graduate from college, have a good paying job, and be debt free and trouble free.

Anthony Crusan
Age 19
Hubert H. Humphrey
Job Corps Center

anthony:

St. Paul

Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center
St. Paul, Minnesota
PEPNet '96

This residential program serves economically disadvantaged young people ages sixteen to twenty-four. It offers strongly integrated vocational and basic education training as well as social-skills development. Corps members take part in a six-week work experience program as well as regular work-based training opportunities. Those who complete a high school diploma or GED can enroll in one of two advanced career options: Transportation Communication and College Program, and earn a certification or an associates degree. The Center is operated by Vinnell Corporation and is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center
1480 North Snelling Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
(612) 642-1133

David MacKenzie
Center Director

When I was sixteen years old, I left home and dropped out of school.

I moved from job to job and even found a small room to live in, but it was hard to manage rent because I did not have a good job. When I was eighteen, I did find a steady, minimum wage job working in a restaurant, but I was never able to land a better job because I did not have my high school diploma. I had goals of joining the Coast Guard and being a paramedic, but I felt stuck.

One night, I was talking to a friend who had just completed the Job Corps program. He told me that at Job Corps I could get my GED and complete a Health Occupations course. Job Corps also provided food and housing. I was excited about all the opportunities that Job Corps offered. After three years of doing nothing, I was ready to start moving toward the goals I had set for myself. I entered the program on October 19, 1997.

After six months at Job Corps, I have earned my GED and I am working towards completing my vocation. When finished, I'll have my Certified Nursing Assistant license, so I'll be able to work in a nursing home or hospital setting. With my GED and CNA, my goal of being a paramedic and getting into the Coast Guard is much more attainable.

I no longer feel stuck. I look forward to the future and meeting the new goals and challenges that I set for myself.

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Vilayvanh Insixiengmay
Age 22
Los Angeles Conservation Corps

My name is Vilay-anh Insixiengmay but my friends call me Vicky.

vicky:

Los Angeles

Los Angeles Conservation Corps
Los Angeles, California
PEPNet '96

This program serves young people from Los Angeles between the ages of twelve and twenty-three. Corps members work on various beautification projects in collaboration with some forty local organizations. They also receive a wide variety of services including basic academic instruction, environmental education, job readiness skills training, career counseling, job placement services, college enrollment assistance, and child care services. The program receives funds from federal, state, and city agencies as well as from local banks.

Los Angeles Conservation Corps
2824 South Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 749-3601

Bruce Saito
Executive Director

My family is from Thailand, however I really don't have a family in the traditional sense. When I was thirteen, I was left to fend for myself on the streets of South Central Los Angeles. Gang banging was my life and I was constantly in trouble with the law. I was compelled to steal for food and shelter. To say the least, it was extremely dangerous and very frightening. I am lucky and proud that I never got caught up in drug use or prostitution.

I thought my life would be nothing but violence, crime, and the jail system. However, when my son was born, a miracle came into my life. I felt as if my entire life had been transformed. I was soon on welfare to support my son, and I immediately started looking for a job. Due to my lack of education, inexperience, and appearance (I have numerous tattoos on my neck and hands), I was constantly turned down at interviews and I was quite discouraged.

Finally, another miracle saved me. I found a job at the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. They did not turn me down because of my appearance or my lack of a high school diploma or GED. Instead, I found a good job and earned my GED. I learned skills such as using power tools, construction techniques, trail building, and erosion control. I also continued my education and now am responsible

for teaching local elementary students about environmental stewardship. Almost everyone at the LACC has been helpful, supportive, and dedicated. They want to see me succeed as much as I do.

I am presently an Assistant Crew Leader and driver for the Garden Crew. We help establish and care for community gardens throughout the Los Angeles region. I am involved in the Master Gardener program through the University of California Cooperative Extensions Department, and am now subcontracting my gardening talents.

> "They did not turn me down because of my appearance or my lack of a high school diploma or GED."

After LACC, I intend to pursue a career in gardening or horticulture. At the beginning, my future was very blurry but now I see much more clearly and know what I want for myself and my son. My path is looking good and I am confident it will get better just as long as I am strong and do the best I can.

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James Smith
Age 21
Manufacturing Technology Partnership

james:

Flint
Michigan

I am married, and have one daughter who is four months old. I graduated in 1994 and I am currently living in Davison, Michigan.

The program I was involved in was called the Manufacturing Technology Partnership (MTP), a joint venture between General Motors and the United Auto Workers, which originated at the Flint Metal Center. I was approached by my guidance counselor because of my grades and he told me about a new program starting the following year. I checked into it and found that it offered the opportunity to learn about skilled trades, excel above my current level, create a career for myself, and get into a job field that offered a job and financial security. Being a pilot program, everything was just being put into practice; everything started from "ground zero" so to speak.

> "Upon completing my apprenticeship, my plans are to return to school to get an electrical engineering degree and eventually a master's degree."

I started the program in 1992, when I was a junior in high school, and graduated from the program with honors in 1994. There were excellent projects, most of which were hands on. One of my favorites was the tapping plate, in which we had to measure, lay out, cut out, and drill holes of different sizes. In another, the assembly line project, we built cardboard cars. In this assignment, everyone had a task to perform. Assignments called for team work among the group for the completion of this assembly process.

After passing the apprenticeship test, I was hired as an electrician apprentice. I am currently in my sixth period with two periods left. In the next two years, I will be finished with my schooling and have my journeyman's card. Upon completing my apprenticeship, my plans are to return to school to get an electrical engineering degree and eventually a master's degree.

Manufacturing Technology Partnership
Flint, Michigan
PEPNet '96

This two-year program prepares selected high school students for a career in the skilled trades. The juniors and seniors, from all twenty-one school districts in Genesee County, Michigan, take academic classes at their home school in the morning. In the afternoon, they attend a county vocational training facility or work in laboratories. At the end of two years, they take the UAW/GM apprenticeship test, and those completing are offered a two-year scholarship by either of the partner colleges. The program is funded by GM, UAW, and a federal School-to-Work grant.

Manufacturing Technology Partnership
UAW/General Motors Flint Metal Center
G-2238 W. Bristol Road
Flint, MI 48453
(810) 236-5676

Calvin Wright
Associate Administrator of Education and Training

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andrea:

San Francisco
California

Andrea R. Threets
Age 18
McKesson Summer Youth Development Program

Before entering the Summer Youth Development Program (SYDP), I'd just graduated from high school and had no work experience. I was indecisive about my career and educational goals, so I decided to join SYDP. I found out about this program through my church. When I applied for the internship, I honestly didn't think I was going to get it, but I did! My reasons for wanting to get into SYDP were wanting the work experience and wanting to explore some of the career paths that I could be potentially interested in.

I started the program in June 1997. My internship lasted approximately eight weeks. Within those several weeks, I worked at McKesson Headquarters in the Human Resources Department. My job mainly emphasized making sure new employees received their benefits, along with many other tasks.

> "They saw leadership skills in me that I didn't even know existed."

Two things helped me the most during the program. One was our weekly meetings, where we discussed as a group what we experienced during the week and how we were progressing. The staff of SYDP did an excellent job, making sure we expanded our "comfort zones" and leading us into our own thought process.

The other thing that helped me the most was joining the Leadership Program. There were five of us, and our responsibilities included sometimes helping facilitate our weekly meetings and planning future events for the program. That was important to me because they saw leadership skills in me that I didn't even know existed.

At this time I am a student at San Francisco City College and I'm still working at McKesson in the Human Resources Department (Employment & Staffing). In five years I will be out of college and going on to pursue my Masters in Psychology.

McKesson Summer Youth Development Program
San Francisco, California
PEPNet '96

This initiative is a partnership between the McKesson Corporation, the McKesson Foundation, and some twenty non-profit organizations in San Francisco. It serves students from inner-city high schools and local colleges in the Bay Area and, in addition to work, offers team building, social events, and community service. Most of the students work in non-profit organizations, with the McKesson Foundation providing grants to the organizations to cover the costs. The others work in different departments at McKesson headquarters. Employees serve as supervisors, mentors, workshop facilitators, and student advisors.

McKesson Summer Youth Development Program
McKesson Corporation
One Post Street, 29th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 983-7660

Pamela Ulmer
Community Relations Manager

Niketa Wilks
Age 19
Milwaukee
Community Service
Corps

I am employed at the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, where I am now learning a pre-apprenticeship.

Before the Corps, I was at Sun Cleaning Systems, which was a very easy cleaning job. We didn't have a supervisor, it was a pretty laid-back, easy job.

I'm happy I could find a job that's teaching me a skill and not just how to make a burger and fries. If not for my cousin, I would not be working for the Corps. I wanted to learn more about masonry and bricklaying, and I soon found out this was the place to learn it and get my GED or High School Equivalency Degree. I started this program in summer 1997, June 29th to be exact.

I have been here for nine long months and I have about four more to go. I can't forget about my supervisor even though we didn't always see eye to eye. He taught me everything he knows. He taught me how to be consistent in my work. I really don't need a supervisor anymore; I think that's good progress in nine months. After the Corps I want to go back to school for Business Management and maybe I'll have my own construction company some day.

"I can't forget about my supervisor even though we didn't always see eye to eye."

niketa: Milwaukee Wisconsin

Milwaukee Community Service Corps
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
PEPNet '96

Milwaukee Community Service Corps hires young people, ages eighteen to twenty-three, primarily from inner-city neighborhoods. Once hired they are assigned to one of four programs, based on their individual occupational interests: MCSC Crew (community service), AmeriCorps, Youth Apprenticeship, and YouthBuild. Each of the programs integrates work education, job training, career exploration, life skills and personal growth. The initiative receives funding from JTPA, Community Development Block Grants, unions, YouthBuild Milwaukee, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private foundations.

Milwaukee Community Service Corps
1150 E. Brady Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 276-6272

Rebecca Guerrero
Youth Development Coordinator

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Vanessa Romero
Age 19
Vocational Foundation, Inc.

vanessa:

New York

New York

Vocational Foundation, Inc.
New York, New York
PEPNet '96

VFI's Moving Up Career Advancement Program serves New York City residents ages seventeen to twenty-four, most of whom have dropped out of school. The program combines basic skills instruction, job training, and placement with two years of intensive, weekly counseling after the participant has been placed on a job. The facilities are located in a Manhattan office building, and students must follow the dress code and work schedule of the other tenants. VFI receives funding from fifteen corporations, fifteen foundations, and various government agencies.

Vocational Foundation, Inc
Moving Up Career
Advancement Program
902 Broadway
New York, NY 10010
(212) 777-0700

Rebecca Taylor
Executive Director

I enrolled in Vocational Foundation Inc. (VFI) in January 1997, and attended their five-month Office Technology Training program.

They taught me various computer software programs and office procedures that were very helpful. My counselor at VFI taught us everything from interviewing skills to business fashion. He was like a drill sergeant, disciplining us if we were one minute late or wore sneakers to school! At first I thought he was fanatical, but now I thank him. He turned me into a responsible, reliable employee, teaching me that one slip up can mean everything. VFI opened doors for me that once seemed unattainable. For example, I was one of twelve students to enter the Internship Program with Prudential Securities, Inc., where I grew and developed professionally, learning the entire range of clerical operations.

Today I am an administrative assistant at a dialysis center in New York for people who have complete kidney failure. One of the reasons they hired me was because of my computer knowledge and office skills. My supervisor was very impressed with my training background and decided to give me the opportunity to work for her. I have not let her down. VFI continues to watch over me, always lending a helping hand when I need one. Right now, I plan to enroll in college and study Gynecology and Obstetrics. In five years, I hope to be in medical school. I will continue working and enhancing myself professionally, while working towards my dream.

"VFI opened doors for me that once seemed unattainable."

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Anthony Guzman
Age 22
New Jersey Youth Corps of Camden County
The Work Group

Anthony:

Pennsauken
New Jersey

Prior to Youth Corps, I had a number of dead-end jobs with no real future. I had not finished high school and had no understanding of how important education was. Life was just passing me by. My peers were hanging out, doing drugs, wasting their life. Employers treated me without courtesy or respect. I was young and indecisive and just plain foolish. One day, my Mom came home and told me about The Work Group and their Youth Corps program. After about two years of sitting home doing nothing, I realized it was time to wake up and do something for myself.

> "The moment I received my associate's degree, my whole life changed."

Entering The Work Group gave me a fresh beginning and a second chance. From the first day the staff treated me with respect and took me in with open arms. Part of my time was spent in academics, preparing me for my GED, and part in work experience. I got to explore career options and experience first-hand the world of work. I had the opportunity to do volunteer work in a hospital. I always thought I wanted to be a doctor, and that experience showed me the number of years of dedication, what is involved, and just how hard it would be. The staff helped me to see the importance of continuing my education and gave me the motivation to move on.

I am proud to say that I earned my Associate's degree from Camden County College last year and am currently a third-year student at Rutgers University planning to go to medical school and become a general surgeon. In addition to going to school full-time, I have a full-time job as a manager in a restaurant.

My feelings about my life now are so great it is hard to put into words. I feel honored that I had people who cared. The moment I received my degree, my whole life changed because now I have achieved respect and can hold my head up high. I love school and would love to go on forever. Because of my education accomplishments, I have been able to achieve status in my life.

In a few years I will be finishing medical school and beginning my career as a doctor. It was the fresh beginning at The Work Group that gave me a chance to be someone and achieve my dreams.

New Jersey Youth Corps of Camden County
Pennsauken, New Jersey
PEPNet '96

This program serves county residents ages sixteen to twenty-five who have dropped out of high school, have limited literacy, and are unemployed. The program's curriculum embeds all learning, including GED preparation, into topics of civic responsibility, economic understanding, and personal, interpersonal, and career development. Employer Advisory Groups provide advice about labor market trends, curriculum issues, and access to jobs. The Youth Corps is funded by the New Jersey Department of Education, Camden County JTPA, and the County Department of Community Affairs.

New Jersey Youth Corps of Camden County
The Work Group
3720 Marlton Pike
Pennsauken, NJ 08105
(609) 486-7390

Deborah Reese
President/CEO

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Keri Mitchell
Age 17
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center Youth Employment Program

keri:

New York

New York

Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center Youth Employment Program
New York, New York
PEPNet '96

This initiative serves young people from public housing developments in Harlem or Yorkville and consists of three services. The youth leadership program involves fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds in community volunteer work. The job bank helps young adults ages sixteen to twenty-four gain basic job search skills. The three-week STRIVE (Structured Training Results in Valuable Employees) focuses on entry-level employment skills for young adults ages seventeen to twenty-four. The program receives funds from state and city agencies and from several private foundations.

Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center Youth Employment Program
415 East 93rd Street
New York, NY 10128
(212) 360-7620

Howard Knoll
Director of Youth Services

I live in the Isaacs/Holmes Public Housing Development on the east side of Manhattan. When I was twelve years old, a friend told me about the Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center. I learned that the center had programs for youth in the evenings. When I joined the center, I received assistance with my homework and had a place to be with other young people.

For the last five years I have participated in many different activities. I am a member of a Young Women's Group where we meet to discuss personal issues, learn about careers, and plan for college. I contribute my time to the Youth Management Team where we plan activities, recruit other youth, fund raise, and develop new ideas for programs. Recently I went to a conference in Savannah, Georgia with other Youth Management Team members to present a panel on how we work as a group. It was a very exciting experience for me and the other teens!

I obtained employment through the center's Youth Leadership Programs. I worked as a Peer Tutor with a young child, a Elder Helper with a senior citizen, and now work as an Office Aide after school.

When I first started high school, I wanted to join the Air Force. I didn't think I had the money or the grades to attend college. The center organized college trips for teens to learn about their programs.

> "When I visited the colleges, I fell in love with them."

When I visited the colleges, I fell in love with them. I began to recognize that college would be a great way to extend my education and choose a career. Without participating in these trips, I would have joined the military.

Staff at the center assisted me with financial aid applications and provided a tutor to keep my grades up. I will be attending John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York in the Fall of 1998. After graduation, I plan on joining the New York City Police Department or the FBI. While I do not know what the future will bring, I know that I could not have come this far had it not been for my experience at SINC.

Olisa Lake
Age 18
STRIVE/East Harlem
Employment Project

I entered the STRIVE program after graduating Central Park East Secondary School in June 1997.

While looking for employment, I started to evaluate my lack of skills in marketing myself. The STRIVE program was a wonderful experience that allowed me to build my self-esteem and encouraged me to work to become a great woman in and out of the workplace.

Before I attended STRIVE, I spoke in a low, soft voice when asking for an application. My nervousness was uncontrollable during interviews and my lack of confidence showed clearly to the employer.

The trainers at STRIVE had a unique way of bringing a fellow teammate out of similar shy behavior. Every morning, she had to tell three jokes in front of teammates. I also learned a great deal from other people in my team. We shared personal stories that brought us together. Eventually I helped my teammates to prepare themselves for future interviews as I improved my skills.

Graduating STRIVE on my eighteenth birthday brought me great joy. I constantly use the lessons learned in my STRIVE experience. It was the most intensive three weeks of my life. I will be attending the New School for Social Research, studying sociology at Eugene Lang College. I look forward to using all the skills I have learned in order to become a successful and productive person.

"I constantly use the lessons learned in my STRIVE experience."

olisa: New York

STRIVE/East Harlem
New York, New York
PEPNet '96

STRIVE/East Harlem Employment Service prepares inner-city youth ages eighteen to twenty-five for long-term employment. Although the program's services include career development, counseling on housing and domestic-related issues, educational advice and alumni activities, it focuses on attitudinal development during a three-week workshop that involves considerable group interaction and oral communications. This is followed by two years of post-placement support. STRIVE receives its funding from corporations, private foundations, and churches.

STRIVE/East Harlem Employment Service
1820 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10029
(212) 360-1100

Lorenzo D. Harrison
Deputy Executive Director/Vice President

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Melisa Delano
Age 18
Summer Works! JTPA

melisa:
Bakersfield

Without knowing much about me, a person might think that I have lived a privileged life.

In fact, joining JTPA gave me the direction that I am heading in today. I have lived in Bakersfield, California all my life. When I was seven years old, my parents separated and my mother raised my brother and me on her own. She needed to pay for my father's unpaid bills. As her wages were attached we were forced to live with my grandparents where we still reside today. As I was entering my first year of high school, my mother struggled to maintain a lifestyle that was beyond meeting our basic needs. Knowing that slacking off would get me nowhere fast, I worked hard in academics and I now stand thirteenth in a class of 380. Being one-half Caucasian and Mexican, I have many barriers to face while at the same time being a young woman.

I was first referred to JTPA when I was fourteen years old. I entered the program with apprehension, but optimistic that it would help me in the long run. The program focused on academics as well as a job-based setting. Math, English and computer skills were taught for the first three hours, and the next three hours were spent working. Every job assignment throughout the years taught students how to manage a check, successfully execute their job assignments, and how to handle customers, when applicable.

The difference in the program was the instructors. Without their constant push and determination, the program would be like every other program claiming to help youth. With the JPTA business-like setting, the students are able to experience how a real job is managed. Thanks to this program, I have been accepted to California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo (in the fall) with an architecture major. Because of JTPA's Drafting/Autocad Designer's small business, I was able to find direction, establish my career goals and receive the direction I need to succeed.

"With the JTPA business-like setting, the students in the program are able to experience how a real job is managed."

Summer Works! JTPA
Bakersfield, California
PEPNet '97

This summer youth program serves all JTPA eligible young people, ages fourteen to twenty-one, in the Kern High School District of Bakersfield, California. It organizes projects into three categories: work-based learning, offering training at work sites; simulated businesses operating at school sites; and team projects supplying a genuine community service. Over 800 businesses interact with the projects, providing tours, supplies, and on-site work experience. Employers' Training Resources, the local JTPA agency, funds the initiative.

Summer Works! JTPA
Kern High School District
Career Resource Division
Career Services Center
5121 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(805) 336-6728

Mary Davisson
Career Projects Supervisor

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glenda:

Providence
Rhode Island

Glenda I. Delgado
Age 17
URI/GAP JTPA
Summer Employment
Initiative

I have lived in Providence, Rhode Island all of my life, but my parents are originally from the island of Puerto Rico. I am a junior in a large urban high school that experiences many of the same problems of other big city schools, particularly a lack of resources.

I heard about the JTPA summer employment program through the University of Rhode Island Guaranteed Admissions Program (GAP) at school. I considered applying because it sounded very interesting, caught my attention, and I needed a summer job.

I started in July of 1996, and was in the program for eight weeks. We compiled research about careers in the medical affiliated fields. I really learned how to work with different kinds of people and I also learned how to express myself openly and deal with difficult situations. My second JTPA/GAP was during the summer of 1997. We investigated three neighborhoods in Providence and used environmental mapping to show problem areas that contained vacant buildings, a lack of trees, or other unsuitable conditions. Both years we presented our information in book form using the computers at the university.

Right now, I lead a very busy life. I maintain a straight "A" average in all of my classes. I am editor of Central High School's newspaper, Centrum. I also hold two part-time jobs: I work at an accounting firm and at Roger William Park Zoo. I am a member of the Future Business Leaders of America club in my school and I am enrolled in the Educational Talent Search. I am still very involved in GAP during the school year. I feel the JTPA/GAP program helped me to learn how to express myself, work with almost anyone, work on large projects to organize and compile information, and to set new and better goals for myself and my future. I plan to attend a four-year college after I graduate next year.

> "I really learned how to work with different kinds of people and I also learned how to express myself openly and deal with difficult situations."

URI/GAP JTPA Summer Employment Initiative
Providence, Rhode Island
PEPNet '96

The Guaranteed Admissions Program of the University of Rhode Island prepares students for college and guarantees their admission into URI. The summer program enables ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders at three high schools in Providence to earn money while improving their writing, research, computer, and communication skills. During the school year, program coordinators at the schools monitor the students' progress and oversee activities that include test preparation, college field trips, after-school tutoring sessions, and a college admissions workshop. The program receives funding from federal, state, and local agencies, and corporations.

University of Rhode Island/
Guaranteed Admissions
Program
JTPA Summer Employment
Initiative
URI Urban Field Center
80 Washington Street, # 302
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 277-5243

Kathleen Dodge
Deputy Director

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Drayvon C.
Age 15
Work Appreciation for Youth

drayvon:

Dobbs Ferry

New York

Work Appreciation for Youth
Dobbs Ferry, New York
PEPNet '97

The Children's Village serves children from New York City and Westchester County who have been removed from their families. The WAY initiative is for those, all boys, who live in the Residential Treatment Center. The boys can move through four levels of increasingly responsible jobs in their cottages, on campus, and in the community. Youngsters at the third or fouth level may apply for five-year WAY Scholarships. These provide intensive counseling as well as matching funds for post-secondary education or job training. WAY is supported by private donors.

Work Appreciation for Youth
The Children's Village, Inc.
The Children's Village
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522
(914) 693-0600

Candace Rashada
WAY Program Director

I came to The Children's Village almost a year ago, right after my grandmother died. She had raised me since I was eight years old, so when she passed away I started getting into some trouble. I was in a few foster care placements and they didn't work out, so I came to The Children's Village. On my first day at the Village, my social worker introduced me to the other kids and told me about the Work Appreciation for Youth program (WAY) and all the other programs offered at CV. It took some time for me to adjust, but I learned to start putting the past behind me, and slowly, with a lot of work and help along the way, things started to get better.

I had heard that the WAY program helped kids with job skills and education, so I decided to give it a try. The program has five levels, and I started from the beginning, doing chores in my cottage. Then I got a job at the Village Store, one of CV's work sites. I had to get dressed for work every day, and I learned some great skills, like how to use a cash register and take inventory. The supervisor of the Village Store recommended me for the fourth level of WAY at a job in the medical building, where I work now. She also suggested that I apply for the fifth level, WAY Scholarship. That's the highest level, and the most important, because you sign a

> "I made the honor roll this semester."

contract with a counselor that you'll stay in each other's lives for five years after leaving CV. I recently found out that I made it to the fifth level. I made the honor roll this semester, and I'm working hard so that when I graduate I can go to college and one day live out my dream to become a lawyer.

Jessica Skogen
Age 20
Youth Connections of Southeast Minnesota

jessica:

Rochester

Before I came to Rochester Off Campus (ROC) Alternative School I thought a high school diploma was out of my reach

At that time I was recently released from a drug treatment center that was out of town. I was reluctant to go back to the high school I attended before treatment out of fear of a relapse. I was just eight and one-half months sober and I was not ready to face the friends that I once skipped school with to get high.

I decided to explore my options to see if there was a way to graduate without going to a mainstream school. I discovered through a newspaper article that there would be a new alternative school starting. I applied for acceptance to the school feeling that this might be my last hope for a diploma. Luckily they accepted me.

ROC turned out to be the perfect school for me. It had small classes, so I could get the extra help I needed and it also gave me the opportunity to make new friends. While I was attending ROC, I had a life skills class that talked about going to college and how to apply. Until that day, I never thought I was smart enough to go to college, but the teacher made me realize I was and that college was definitely an option.

"I never thought I was smart enough to go to college."

After two years at ROC I earned my high school diploma. I am now four and one-half years sober and in my second year of college. I am studying pre-med and I recently opened my own business. ROC gave me the confidence to believe in myself and to know that I can accomplish anything if I'm willing to work at it.

Youth Connections of Southeast Minnesota
Rochester, Minnesota
PEPNet '97

Participants in Youth Connections come from a ten-county area in Minnesota, range in age from thirteen to twenty-one, and meet JTPA eligibility. The initiative offers fourteen components, including the alternative school, Computer Class 2000, where youth learn to assemble and use a computer, and The Bike Shop Project, where young people refurbish bikes, learn bike safety, and attend summer school. Youth Connections is operated by the Southeast Minnesota Private Industry Council and receives JTPA funding.

Youth Connections of Southeast Minnesota
Southeast Minnesota Private Industry Council
300 11th Avenue, NW
Suite 110
Rochester, MN 55901
(507) 281-4670

Randy Johnson
Executive Director

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Dion Domicello
Age 20
Youth Internship Program

dion:
New York

Youth Internship Program
New York, New York
FEPNet '96

This initiative helps out-of-school young people ages sixteen to twenty-one from all five boroughs of New York City. It integrates academic and early childhood education instruction with a six-week full-time internship in a child care center. A high number of participants earn their GED and go on to two or four-year colleges. The program receives funding from JTPA, supplemented by local and federal literacy grants. The New York City Board of Education pays the teachers.

Youth Internship Program
Young Adult Learning Academy
320 East 96th Street
New York, NY 10128
(212) 348-0269

Leslie Reid
Executive Director

My name is Dion Domicello, and I am twenty years old.

I live in Manhattan at a group home called the Youth Residence Center. I have been in the foster care system since the age of thirteen, due to the death of my parents.

After I graduated high school, I tried attending college. I realized I wasn't academically prepared for a higher level of education. Being part of the system, I was never in a settled environment. Therefore, I was cheated out of a good education, and this caused me to believe I did not have the skills to pursue my education.

Near the end of my first semester, I decided to leave school and find a job. I felt lost and had no direction. A friend, who was a former student at the Young Adult Learning Academy in the Youth Internship Program (YIP), came to my rescue. He told me about YIP and I decided to give it a try. I entered this program hoping to gain a sense of direction which the counselors provided.

> "I entered this program hoping to gain a sense of direction."

I started the program in July of 1997 and am now an alumnus of the program.

Two things that helped me the most were my internship experience and the staff's encouragement and support. The internship gave me a chance to get a feel for working with young children. The staff "stayed on my case" when I was losing sight of my goal.

I am currently attending the Borough of Manhattan Community College where I am pursuing my degree in early childhood development. I am also working at Bloomingdale's Day Care Center with three-year-olds. In five years, I will be a college graduate and will be teaching three-year-olds at a day care center.

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Eric Clark
Age 26
YouthBuild McLean County

Just a few years ago I was an active gang member and my life was headed down the wrong path. I had dropped out of school and was doing nothing to get an education. When I got into some real trouble with the law, I decided I might need to start making some changes in my life.

> "My wife and I just bought our first house a year ago. This is the first time I have ever lived outside of public housing."

I moved to Bloomington to be with my girlfriend and children. We moved into public housing and I started working part-time with the Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA). I wanted to get my GED so I tried working, going to school, and taking care of my family. It didn't work. Then the BHA started a new program called YouthBuild.

I got the job with YouthBuild and was now considered a YouthBuild trainee. I thought things were going pretty good, so I started hanging out with the guys again and getting into trouble. I talked to my counselor at YouthBuild and she guided me to what I needed to do, plus there were classes in the program that I started to focus more on. When I started listening and following the rules, that's when the change started to happen.

While in YouthBuild I learned to get along with other races. I respect people and they respect me. I drove the van for YouthBuild. That was a big responsibility for me because I had to pick up the other trainees and their children, take the children to day care and get everyone else to YouthBuild safe and on time. I became a voice in the Youth Policy Committee and started taking ownership of this program. I stopped blaming other people for my problems and knew I was the only one who could change them.

I currently work full-time for the Bloomington Housing Authority in the Maintenance Department, my wife has a great job at State Farm Insurance, and my two boys are doing great in school. My wife and I just bought our first house a year ago. This is the first time I have ever lived outside of public housing. I am very happily married and am taking an active role in raising my two boys, ages four and seven. I could not have done any of this without YouthBuild. In five years, I would like to have my own business such as a barber shop or a small neighborhood grocery store.

:ric:
Bloomington
Illinois

YouthBuild McLean County
Bloomington, Illinois
PEPNet '97

Each year, YouthBuild McLean County takes about fifty out-of-school young people from the county, ages sixteen to twenty-four, and puts them through a two-week Mental Toughness boot camp. About twenty are selected for the one-year program during which they spend half their time in a classroom and the other half at a worksite building homes which are then sold to low-income families. A non-profit organization, YouthBuild McLean County receives support from federal, city, and county agencies and from local universities and businesses.

YouthBuild McLean County
1312 W. Monroe Street
Bloomington, IL 61701
(309) 827-7507

Suzanne Fitzgerald
Director

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Lauresha S. Ponzo-Huggins
Age 19
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School

lauresha:

Philadelphia *Pennsylvania*

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
PEPNet '97

This charter school serves young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who have dropped out of school and have a low income. Participants spend half their time at construction sites rebuilding abandoned houses and half in the classroom working toward a high school diploma. They also receive extensive counseling support and opportunities for community service. The program receives funds from HUD, the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development, the Philadelphia school district, and private foundations.

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School
(Philadelphia Youth for Change Charter School)
Philadelphia Youth Corps
619 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 627-8671

Simran Sidhu
Coordinator of Development and Special Events

I'm a nineteen-year-old black female who has been given a chance to live out her dreams. Before coming to the YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, I was working two jobs and barely getting by. I had an eleventh grade education and believed I was too old to go back to school. In my heart I felt I could do better, but people kept telling me I wasn't smart enough to go back and complete school.

In 1997, after dropping out, I worked all year long when I could have been in school learning something new. I knew that an eleventh grade education wouldn't take me very far in life. I wanted my mother to be proud of me. I didn't want to be a failure in her eyes. I came back to school at YouthBuild for myself and my family. At first, coming back was a struggle for me. Getting up early and being here every day at 7:30 a.m. was a test for me. But I knew it was my last chance to get a high school diploma. Today, I'm eight months into the program and feeling proud!

In March, our whole school went to Camp Unami to spend two days in the woods. On both days we

had really busy schedules. But what I remember most is the scavenger hunt. We had to find a cup with our teacher's name on it in the middle of the woods. With only the help of a compass we searched the campgrounds for the hidden cup. Out of the forty classmates who were looking, I was the one who found the cup. It was determination that helped me find that cup, and

> "YouthBuild has given me the strength to see a brighter tomorrow."

that same determination will help me graduate in June.

My future now looks bright and promising. YouthBuild has taught me leadership, responsibility, respect for others, and most of all, self confidence. It has given me the strength to see a brighter tomorrow.

Jason:
Rockford

Jason Sweet
Age 17
YouthBuild Rockford

Before coming to YouthBuild, I was working two full-time jobs and trying to enroll into schools.

I was having trouble finding a school that would accept me because of my age and lack of credits.

That's when I found out about the YouthBuild program in the local newspaper. Right around their graduation time they list the graduates. I then decided to take the next step and visit YouthBuild and fill out an application. I considered the program because of the offerings and benefits that I can receive. My first day at YouthBuild was October 13, 1997, and I have been enrolled for about seven months.

"My construction trainer is important to me because he shares his life experiences and I can see that if he can overcome challenges, so can I."

I believe the construction trainers and the teachers are helping me the most by teaching and encouraging me to receive my diploma and learn the construction skills that are available to me. My construction trainer is important to me because he shares his life experiences and I can see that if he can overcome challenges, so can I. YouthBuild also made me feel like I was an important member of the program and part of team right from the beginning, starting at our retreat at Camp White Eagle. The program director put a lot of faith in me also by suggesting that I run for the Youth Policy Council. Right now I am working on finishing the program early and exploring all possible employment opportunities.

Five years from now I would like to be finishing an apprenticeship in the construction trades, or even going to school to seek a degree in architecture, on my way to fulfilling the American dream.

YouthBuild Rockford
Rockford, Illinois
PEPNet '97

YouthBuild Rockford recruits local young people ages sixteen to twenty four who are not in school. It offers academic instruction and job training as trainees create community facilities and affordable housing for the homeless. It also provides job placement assistance, with trainees placed in internships prior to graduation whenever possible. The program also operates a labor bank for the Rockford Housing Authority, providing names of eligible program graduates to authority contractors. Funding comes from HUD, Community Development Block Grants, and private foundations.

YouthBuild Rockford
Midwest Correctional Services, Inc.
310 S. Avon Street
Rockford, IL 61102
(815) 963-6236

Kerry D. Knodle
Executive Director

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Contributing Members

Abt Associates
Academy for Educational Development
AFL-CIO Human Resource Development Institute
American Youth Work Center
Alianza Dominicana
Bay State Skills Corporation

National Youth Employment Coalition

Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University
Contra Costa County Office of Education/Neighborhood Youth Corps
Corporation for Public Management
Corporation for Business Work and Learning
Empire State Organization of Youth Employment Services
Grand Street Settlement House
Gulf Coast Trades Center
Home Builders Institute
Institute for Educational Leadership
Jobs for Youth, Inc. - New York
KRA Corporation
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National Association of Community Action Agencies
National Association of Counties
National Child Labor Committee, New York, NY
National Council of La Raza, Washington, DC
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The Work Group, Camden, NJ
Women in Community Service

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AFL-CIO Human Resource Development Institute
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American Youth Policy Forum
Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources
Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Youth Services Division
Bay Area Employment and Training Coalition
Boston Workforce Development Coalition
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Manufacturing Technology Partnership
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Minnesota Youth Programs
National Academy Foundation
National Alliance of Business
National Association of Private Industry Councils
National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
National Association of State Directors/Voc. Tech. Ed.
National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning & Commuter Leadership
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National Puerto Rican Coalition
National Puerto Rican Forum
National Urban League
New York City Job and Career Center
New York City Summer Youth Program Contractors Coalition
New York City Youth Employment Consortium
New York Private Industry Council
New York State JTPC
Oakland Private Industry Council
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Pennsylvania Conservation Corps
Phoenix Youth Employment Coalition
PIVOT: NEW CHANCE
Prince George's County Private Industry Council
San Francisco Youth Employment Coalition
School and Main, New England Medical Center
South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp.
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center
Star Mountain, Inc.
STRIVE - East Harlem Employment Service
Tri-County Private Industry Council, Inc.
United Friends of the Children Bridges
United Neighborhood Houses of New York, Inc.
United Way of New York City
US Basics, Inc.
US Conference of Mayors
US Peace Corps
Vocational Foundation, Inc.
WAVE, Inc.
West County Community Services
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.
YMCA of the USA
Young Adult Learning Academy
YouthBuild USA
Youth Resource Development Corporation
Youth Service America

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National Youth Employment Coalition
Executive Committee
1997 - 1998

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For More Information

If you want more information about NYEC or PEPNet, visit our website at **www.nyec.org** or write to us at:

NYEC
1836 Jefferson Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Organizations involved in youth employment/development serving youth ages 14 to 25 may apply to be recognized by PEPNet. To receive a PEPNet application, fax NYEC at 202-659-0399 or visit NYEC's website.

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